

April 9, 2010

WASHINGTON, DC - Today, U.S. Rep. Michael A. Arcuri (NY-24) spent the day in Cayuga County where he discussed the benefits of the Cayuga County Regional Digester project with local officials and highlighted the more than \$6.75 million in funding he helped secure, visited a fully operational digester at Sunnyside Farm in Venice, NY, discussed important issues with local farmers at an agriculture advisory board meeting, and joined the Auburn Rotary Club to celebrate its 95th birthday.

Arcuri joined more than 40 representatives from across Cayuga County including the County Legislature, Public Utility Service Agency, Soil and Water Conservation District, and Industrial Development Agency at the Cayuga County Regional Digester site to highlight the economic and environmental impact of the project on the local community. This project, which could be operational as early as this winter, is funded primarily by a \$6,277,801 Green Innovation Grant through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Recovery Bill) and a \$475,750 earmark secured by Arcuri in 2009.

"Using Recovery Bill funding to invest in projects like the Cayuga County Regional Digester project will have a tremendous impact on the local economy and create new jobs, while also promoting environmental sustainability and protecting our most precious natural resource-our abundant supply of clean drinking water," said Arcuri. "Additionally, the energy created by the digester will be used to power local office buildings which will reduce energy costs and ultimately save local taxpayers money."

The Cayuga County Regional Digester, which has created nearly 50 construction jobs to date and will generate an additional 100 more before completion, will create 25 permanent operational jobs at the plant. The infusion of approximately \$8 million construction budget and \$900,000 annual operation budget into the local economy will lead to economic growth throughout the region and create an estimated 196 new jobs due to the multiplier effect.

Once completed, the digester will process manure and other organic waste to produce more than five million kilowatt-hours of electricity (the equivalent of approximately 10,000 barrels of crude oil) per year to power three county office buildings, which will reduce energy costs by \$397,000 annually.

To see, first-hand, the sustainable environmental solution a digester will provide for dairy farmers in Cayuga County, Arcuri toured Sunnyside Farms in Venice Center, NY.

"You can definitely see how a digester is a win-win situation for local farmers," said Arcuri. "By partnering together, farmers are able to reduce costs and, in some cases, actually increase revenue from a waste product that is currently costing them money for handling and disposal. Then after it has been processed you are left with a nitrogen rich liquid fertilizer that requires a smaller application and will improve air quality because the odorous and harmful greenhouse gasses have been removed."

The resultant materials are a virtually odorless, pathogen-free liquid fertilizer that contains mineralized nitrogen which allows it to be absorbed by plants more readily. This requires small application of liquids, in comparison to fertilizing with raw manure, reducing nutrient overloading of land, eliminating the risk of runoffs and preventing the contamination of ground and surface water resources in the area. The plant is expected to produce 22 tons per day of nitrogen rich organic solids and 34,000 gallons per day of fertilizer quality liquids for agricultural use in Cayuga County.

Later in the day Arcuri hosted an Agriculture Advisory Board Meeting made up of farmers, growers and agribusiness owners from around the Finger Lakes region to discuss the state of agriculture in Upstate New York.

"The success of our local small business farmers is critical to the Upstate New York economy," said Arcuri. "It is especially important for me to be responsive to the needs of the thousands dairy farmers and their employees who are struggling to stay in business."

During the meeting, Arcuri discussed the actions he has taken to help dairy farmers who are still recovering from a freefall in the price of milk because of the worldwide economic recession and fewer dairy exports overseas. Those included:

- On March 25, 2010 again wrote a letter to U.S Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary Thomas Vilsack to increase support prices for cheese and non-fat dried milk through the Dairy Product Price Support Program (DPPSP), through which the government

purchases dairy products directly from producers to processors to reduce over-supply and increase prices;

- Sponsored H.R. 4117, which would eliminate all hauling costs for milk producers in efforts to protect dairy farmers from paying unfair fees to milk processors.

- In 2009, Arcuri joined colleagues in sending two separate letters to Secretary Vilsack requesting he increase dairy prices under the DPPSP-within days the USDA responded by raising support prices from August through October;

- Cosponsored the Dairy Fairness Act of 2009 (H.R. 3166), which indexes the MILC payment rate to inflation-something that has not been adjusted since the 1970's;

Lastly, Arcuri honored the Auburn Rotary Club with a certificate of appreciation from the Congress of the United States for 95 years of dedicated service to the community at an event held that evening.

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